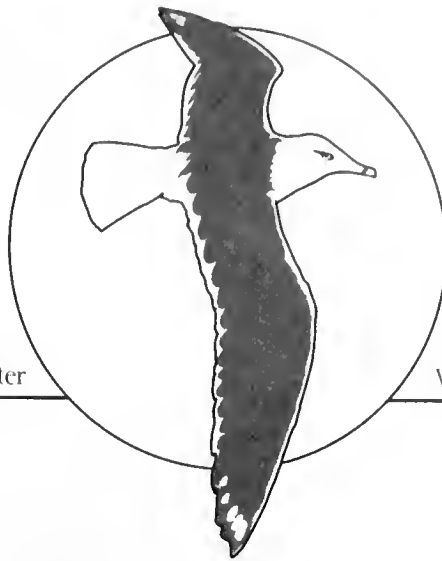


The Gull



JUL 24 2000

Golden Gate Audubon Society Newsletter

Volume 80, No. 2 February 1998

The Basin's Birds are Getting Ploughed Under

by Arthur Feinstein

In early December, the Golden Gate Audubon Society joined 11 other environmental organizations in suing the U.S. Department of the Interior, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Bureau of Reclamation, for its failure to protect the Lower Klamath and Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges.

The Klamath Basin, located on the border of Oregon and California, is one

of the nation's most critical sites for migratory waterfowl. Historically, the basin held over 350,000 acres of wetlands and supported waterfowl populations numbering in the tens of millions.

Today, less than 25% of those wetlands remain. Nonetheless, the Klamath Basin still witnesses the nation's greatest concentration of migratory waterfowl every year as nearly 80% of the Pacific Flyway's waterfowl population passes through the basin.

Gilding the lily, the Klamath Basin also hosts the largest concentration of wintering Bald Eagles in the United States!

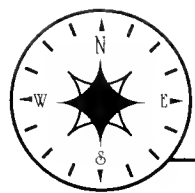
Four National Wildlife Refuges are located in the Klamath Basin. Despite the importance of this area and the fact that the Lower Klamath National Wildlife Refuge was one of the first refuges ever established, the FWS has failed to appropriately manage two of these refuges, the Lower Klamath and the Tule Lake National Wildlife Refuges, for wildlife purposes.

Instead, the FWS has

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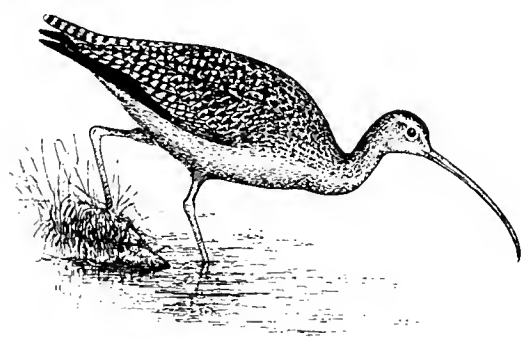


PHOTO BY JOHN GIBBONS



Field Trips Calendar

GAS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1 STRYBING ARBORETUM.

See March 1 trip for details.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11 MINI-TRIP TO COYOTE HILLS REGIONAL PARK.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the parking lot by the Visitors' Center at the end of the road. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 & Jean-Marie Spoelman. (\$) (*) See January Gull for details.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14 PANOCHÉ VALLEY.

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 25 and J-1 in Paicines, 12.5 miles south of Hollister. Leader: Chris Carpenter

(510) 569-9281 day, (510) 547-2201 eve. See January Gull for details.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 21 MCLAREN PARK & CANDLESTICK POINT, SAN FRANCISCO.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at McLaren Park at the intersection of Cambridge and John F. Shelley Drive. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983. (*) See January Gull for details.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28 MOUNTAIN VIEW FOREBAY/CHARLESTON SLOUGH, SANTA CLARA COUNTY.

Meet at 8:30 a.m. for this half-day trip. From San Francisco, take 101 South to the San Antonio Road North exit. Go north (towards the Bay) on San Antonio Road until it ends at a parking lot. Turn right and meet at the far (east) end of the lot. This location is great for shorebirds, ducks, and other aquatic birds, including Black Skimmers. Beginners welcome. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Jennifer Matkin (415) 681-6926. (*)

SUNDAY, MARCH 1 STRYBING ARBORETUM.

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular 1st Sunday of the month half-day trip. The Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several microhabitats attracting a varied array of resident, migrant, and vagrant birds.

Beginners and all others welcome. Leaders: Allan Ridley and Helen McKenna (415) 566-3241.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7 WOODBIDGE ROAD ECOLOGICAL AREA, SAN JOAQUIN DELTA AREA.

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the intersection of I-5 and Hwy. 12, west of Lodi. The first stop will be the Lodi Sewer Ponds. This location is very birdy and is reliable for Pacific Golden Plover. We will then caravan to the Woodbridge Road Ecological Area, where we should see Sandhill Cranes and Tundra Swans. Be prepared for cold. Beginners welcome. Rain cancels. Fog may make viewing difficult. Trip will end by 1:00 p.m. Leader: Jim Rowoth (209) 462-7512.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 11 MINI-TRIP TO MITCHELL CANYON.

Meet at 9:30 a.m. Take Hwy. 24 through the Caldecott Tunnel. At Walnut Creek, take the Ygnacio Valley Rd. exit. Go approximately 8 miles, then turn right onto



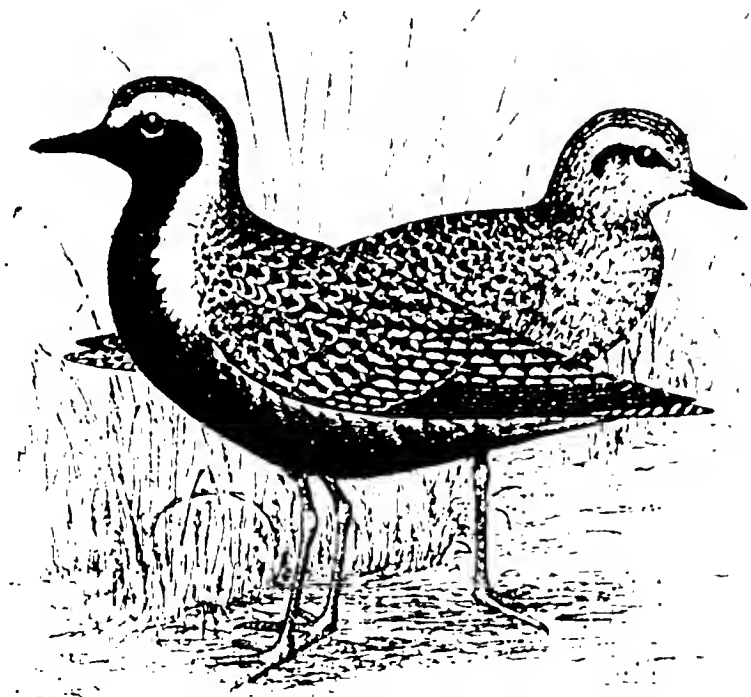
Clayton Rd. Go one mile and make a right onto Mitchell Canyon Rd. and proceed to the parking lot at the end of the road. (Parking outside the entrance will avoid a parking fee.) This is a delightful area with easy stream-side walking and many song-birds. Wear shoes suitable for walking in mud, and bring your lunch. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman. (\$)

**SATURDAY MARCH 14
LAS GALLINAS SEWER PONDS,
MARIN COUNTY.**

Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the parking lot. Take 101 north and exit at the Lucas Valley Drive/Smith Ranch Road off ramp. Go east on Smith Ranch Road to the end. Just before the county park, take a sharp left to the sewage treatment ponds. Drive past the headquarters to the parking lot on the left. We will see wintering ducks and shorebirds, keeping in mind that anything can show up. Trip will end at noon. Beginners welcome. Leader: Hugh Cotter (415) 931-7736.

**SUNDAY MARCH 15
BOLINAS LAGOON AND AREA.**

Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the parking lot (by the grocery store) in downtown Stinson Beach, at the intersection of Calle Del Mar and Hwy. 1. We will bird some of the premier Marin County locations, starting with Bolinas Lagoon, then caravan to the Duxbury area and other places as the leader decides. This will be an all-day



trip, so bring lunch. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Ken Burton (415) 669-1847.

**SATURDAY, MARCH 21
WHITE SLOUGH AREA,
VALLEJO, SOLANO COUNTY.**

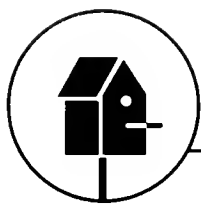
Meet at 8 a.m. at the intersection of Hwy. 37 (aka Marine World Parkway) and Sacramento Street in Vallejo. From Oakland, take I-80 North to Vallejo. Take the 237 exit west to Sacramento Street. Numerous shorebirds, ducks, and other species spend the winter in the northern portion of San Francisco Bay. We will bird until around 2. Bring lunch or snacks. Leader: Robin Leong (707) 643-1287.

**SATURDAY MARCH 28
SAN FRANCISCO BIRD BLITZ.**

In this annual blitz, we expect to tally over 100 different species within the city limits. This year's mad dash, hoping to exceed all

previous records, will begin at 7 a.m. sharp. Meet at the north end of Van Ness Ave. (past North Point - the last cross street) at the foot of Municipal Pier. From there we will caravan to other sites, including Golden Gate Park, Sutro Baths, Lake Merced, and Candlestick Point. Bring lunch and liquids. We will bird until dusk, then adjourn to a restaurant for dinner to recap the day's observations and for a minimal cost, avoid going home to cook. Leader: Alan Hopkins (415) 664-0983 (*)

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked with a (*). See below. Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Lillian Fujii (510) 256-4167, Field Trips Committee Chair.



As the deep-voiced female Great Horned Owl serenaded me to sleep, answered by a prospective mate, it struck me: these huge owls and our tiny Anna's Hummingbird both court, nest, and raise their first broods in the dead of our winter. Granted, the winter season is nowhere near as severe as elsewhere, but we can have drenching rainstorms with considerable winds. While owls raise only one brood, Anna's may raise 2 or even 3 per year – probably because of the survival rate.

Great Horned Owls are very vocal during courtship, and it seems that the female is the aggressive one. I had noticed that hooting began around 4 p.m. in mid-December and continued throughout the nights. Recently, a female landed atop a dead cedar in our yard. As she answered my hoots (even though I wasn't in very good voice), I watched her through my binoculars. Her white throat patch swelled with air, and as she hooted she tilted forward and flipped her tail up and down flirtatiously. I must have scared off any competitors, but I got my husband's attention! The owl continued to call for up to an hour after I got cold enough to retreat indoors. I hope some male found her as enchanting as I did!

These owls usually use abandoned nests of hawks, crows, herons, or even squirrels. I have also seen them on artificial nest-

ing platforms in conifers, in hollows of trees, and even in rocky caves on cliffs (Little Yosemite at Sunol Park). Both parents incubate the 2-3 eggs, and the young first fly about 70 days after hatching. After they leave the nest, but before they learn to fly, however, the young are fed on the ground. These owls enjoy a wide variety of dietary items: all types of rodents (making them invaluable to humans), porcupines, weasels, rabbits, snakes, other birds, and even skunks. After tearing off bites of food, swallowed in chunks, the owl digests what's needed and ejects pellets of undigested bones, fur, feathers, etc. This makes it easy to determine an owl's diet.

Residing on the other side of the size scale, Anna's Hummingbird is among the 14 species of hummingbirds that breed in North America. It is the only one that nests generally within one state (California), and it is common west of the Sierras. It is also the only one to sing, although the thin, squeaky warble uttered from a perch or in flight is hardly melodic. There is also a liquid chirp that they utter as they move from flower to flower, feeding. They rest on conspicuous perches to partially digest the nectar and insects in their crop before continuing to feed. Since a hummingbird's metabolism is faster than any in the animal world except the shrew, this tiny dynamo must

feed nearly every moment of daylight. A strategy has evolved to save energy at night by going into a torpor (as in hibernation, all body processes slow down).

In early December I noted the male Anna's courtship of a female perched on a leafless oak limb. He flew straight up about 50 feet, delivering his buzzy song before plunging downward at tremendous speed, his spread tail feathers making a sharp "peek" at the bottom of the arc. After mating, the male moves on to impress another female, leaving his mate to build her own nest and raise the young alone. No wonder she can't risk going into torpor while she broods the 1-3 eggs for up to 18 days. Her cozy nest is made of plant material lined with lichen, feathers, or anything soft she can hold together with spider webs. I have often walked right past a hummingbird nest, they are so small and well-hidden. The sight of a mother feeding her young is startling. It would appear she is stabbing these tiny babes as she literally pumps food into their tummies, not spilling a single drop. Though small, hummers are fierce defenders of their families as well as their territories. They jealously guard feeders, even whole yards, from competitors.

I guess we could consider the courtships of Great Horned Owls and Anna's Hummingbirds as the warm-up act for the upcoming chorus of spring for the rest of the birds.



Spring Birding Classes

Evening bird classes taught by Joe Morlan and endorsed by the Golden Gate Audubon Society will be starting February 17, 18, & 19, 1998. All classes meet 7:00 - 9:15 p.m. in Room 222, Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay Street. Parking is free in the school lot off Bay St. on the east side of the building.

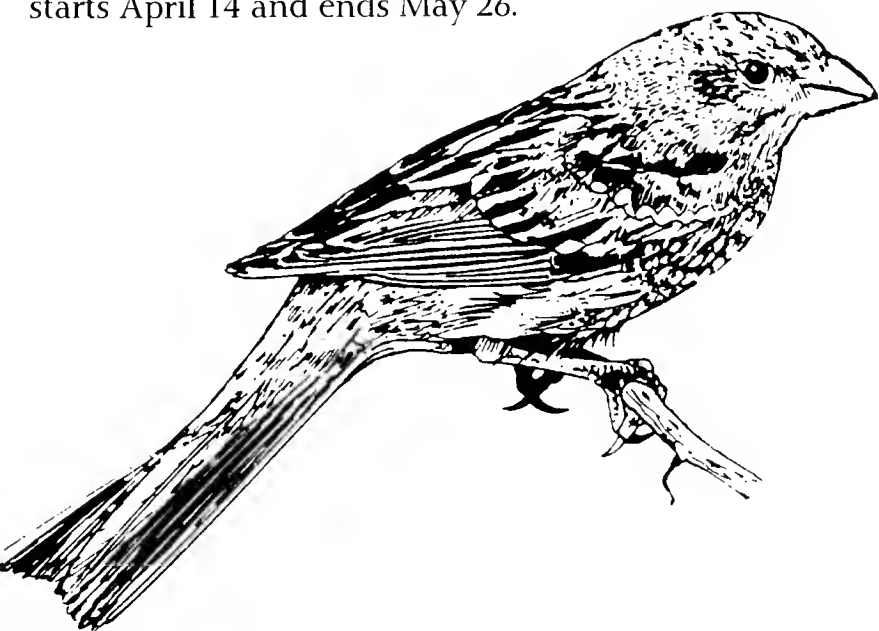
The instructor is coauthor of "Birds of San Francisco and the Bay Area" and "Birds of Northern California." He is the coordinator of the recorded "Northern California Birdbox" sponsored by GGAS. Slides illustrate all lectures, and the text for all classes is "Field Guide to Birds of North America," second edition, by the National Geographic Society.

FIELD ORNITHOLOGY I meets on Tuesdays. It is an introduction to birds and birding, combining basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology, evolution, and behavior. Part A (**EA101**) starts February 17 and ends March 31; Part B (**EA105**) starts April 14 and ends May 26.

FIELD ORNITHOLOGY II meets on Wednesdays. It is a continuing in-depth study of the identification and status of North American land birds, including sparrows, blackbirds, and tanagers. Part A (**EA110**) starts February 18 and ends April 1; Part B (**EA115**) starts April 15 and ends May 27.

FIELD ORNITHOLOGY III meets on Thursdays. It is a continuing study of North American birds including hawks, falcons, grouse, and quail. Part A (**EA120**) starts February 19 and ends April 2; Part B (**EA125**) starts April 16 and ends May 28.

The instructor may arrange optional field trips on weekends. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class if you have them. Fees are \$90 for each seven-week course. Pre-registration is strongly advised. For enrollment and information, call (415) 561-1860.



Gifts and Bequests

Richard Bachenheimer, Carol Baird, Susan Bolton, Eleanor Briccetti, Philip & Margorie Bush, Alan Harper, Virginia Havens, Carolyn Kolka, David Loeb, Lucy & Calvin Lou, Miles McKey, Dean & Julia Mayberry, Robert & Mary Mayer, Mary Mills, Clyde Morris, John Nelson & Hortensia Chang, John & Joyce Schnobrich, Leonard Schwab & Rita Brenner, Tiana Scott

Harold & Amelia Sugarman in honor of Dr. Robert Mendle's 80th birthday

Birdathon:

Dorothy Corvi, The Design Bunch, Mark Eaton, A. L. Howard, Carla Kozak, Irwin & Enid Leff, Miles McKey, Cecilia Martinez, Linda Mitchell, Jane Offers, John Plummer, Stephen & Inga Thal

Memorial:

Ruth Dement in memory of Gertrude Bialos
Robbyn Jackson in memory of Helen Duncan

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in *The Gull*, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.

Golden Gate Park Birds

by Harry Fuller

Golden Gate Park is one of the great urban parks of America. It is a complex, changing blend of the natural and the artificial. It is frequented by local birders, and the occasional vagrant warbler can bring birders from around the state. Yet, only one slender guide has ever been written on the park's birds.

The 84-page Handbook of the Birds of Golden Gate Park was published in 1930 by the California Academy of Sciences. The author: 73-year-old Joseph Mailliard, curator emeritus of ornithology at the Academy. Mailliard grew up on his family's ranch in Marin's San Geronimo Valley. At 62, after years of dedicated field work as an amateur, Mailliard became curator of ornithology at the Academy in 1919. Over his lifetime, Mailliard wrote over 150 scientific articles, largely on California fauna.

In his handbook, Mailliard lists 111 bird species for Golden Gate Park, some rare both then and now. Some common species have lived in the area for centuries.

There were 14 natural lakes in the park when it was originally surveyed 130 years ago. Elk Glen and Chain of Lakes are reshaped survivors from that prehistoric period. Thus, the Mallard was abundant in 1930 as it is today. Both the Pied-billed Grebe and Coot are also natives of Golden Gate Park.

Mailliard also listed a number of wintering ducks: Wigeon (common in 1930), Green-winged

Teal (occasional), Shoveler (occasional), Pintail (common), Bufflehead (not numerous), White-winged Scoter (rare), Surf Scoter (casual), Ruddy (common), Canvasback (often numerous), Lesser Scaup (resident), and Ring-necked Duck (uncommon). The scoters are still rarely seen in the Park. Bufflehead are around annually, either singly or in small groups. They seem to have no favored lake. Wigeons are always to be found on nearly any park pond, starting in October. The Ruddy Duck and the Ring-necked are usually on several park lakes. Scaup no longer breed in the park but do show up on Spreckels Lake, as do Canvasbacks. Green-winged Teal can occur anywhere. Pintails and Shovelers are, however, only sporadic. Today we can also expect Wood Ducks somewhere in the park each winter, but they are rare compared to the 1970s when about 30 wintered on Metson Lake, then moved to Elk Glen. They rarely show up now on Christas Bird Counts. Hooded Mergansers are rare, but one has been around 2 winters in a row, and Cinnamon Teal are now annual on Mallard Lake midwinter until spring migration. And Blue-winged Teal, Eurasian Wigeon, and even Tufted Duck have all appeared in the Park in recent years.

In 1930 the Blue Heron was rare, and just this decade began breeding at Stow Lake. The Great Egret did not even make the 1930 book. Both heron and egret had

PHOTO BY JOHN GIBBONS



Golden Gate Park's most faithful citizen, the

been heavily hunted for plumes for women's hats. Mailliard was writing less than 15 years after the Migratory Bird Treaty outlawed that hunting. In Mailliard's lifetime, the 2 large birds nearly disappeared from the state. Now it is to be expected that either a Blue Heron or Great Egret can be found on one or more of the park's lakes any day outside the breeding season.

Clearly Golden Gate Park's open fields were more extensive in Mailliard's day. He listed American Pipits (Water Pipits then), Killdeer, and Merlin (Pigeon Hawk) as common. No longer true. He also found Swainson's



rd.

Thrush to be common in the park. A chaparral bird, the Bewick's Wren, was common, but not so today. Conversely, the Winter Wren was then a very rare winter visitor. Today the heavier forest growth of the park shelters numerous wintering Winter Wrens from September through March. There are even recent records of this small wren breeding in San Francisco!

The handbook calls the Red-shouldered Hawk (then the red-bellied) "very rare." Now it's a noisy annual breeder in Golden Gate Park and Sutro Heights. A telling sentence on this hawk is found in Mailliard's Handbook:

"The California Academy of Sciences Collections contains two immature birds taken here by the park hunter." That's the same park hunter who wiped out the Steller's Jay for good in the park and nearly killed off the Scrub Jay, on purpose.

The large Common Raven and the minute Pygmy Nuthatch are both plentiful and noisy residents of today's Golden Gate Park. Neither one was listed in Mailliard's book. The little nuthatch was not resident anywhere in San Francisco in 1930 but has moved in with the maturing of the evergreens. Records show the Pygmy had pushed out the Red-breasted Nuthatch by 1970.

The raven's story? No longer hunted, the raven is back. In Mailliard's time, however, even the crow was rare, and he assured his 1930 readers that no raven had ever been recorded in Golden Gate Park. Now both large black Corvids are quite common in the Park. They began to recolonize San Francisco decades ago, but their population really boomed in the 1970s. Both birds now nest in Golden Gate Park.

Five other common birds did not get listed by Mailliard: two are the Tree and Barn swallows. Both are apparently more common in San Francisco today. Perhaps the Tree Swallows increased as trees matured and provided more hollow limbs and spars for nesting. The Barn Swallow, an obvious nester on buildings, may simply be profit-

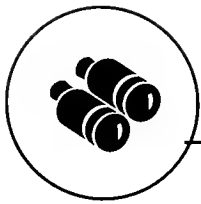
ing from more human tolerance of its mud nests. The California Towhee (Brown Towhee) did not get listed by Mailliard either. Now it seems well-adapted to city park and backyard living.

The last two missing birds in the Handbook? The exotics: Rock Dove and European Starling. Of the starling, Grinnell blissfully wrote, *"This non-native, European species, has, so far as known up to 1944, reached California but once."*

As Dan Murphy pointed out, Joseph Mailliard had much less information to work with than current birders: weaker optics, fewer birders, less knowledge of birds' life cycles, and he was pre-Peterson field guide, making living bird identification less reliable and possible. Dan estimates the Golden Gate Park "life list" would approach 300 species. After all, he found a Prothonotary Warbler there just last year.

The Park's two smallest birds were common then as well, the Anna's and Allen's hummingbirds. The Allen's was first collected by and named for Charles A. Allen, a security guard and gamekeeper on Rancho San Geronimo in Marin in the late 1800s. There he taught the ranch owner's sons about birds, nature, and taxidermy. Those boys were Joseph Mailliard and his brother.

(I am heavily indebted to ace birder, Dan Murphy, for his assistance based on an encyclopedic knowledge of breeding bird records in his native city.)



November 24 to December 26, 1997

After a strong storm late in November, December had little precipitation and provided good conditions for the Northern California Christmas bird counts (and counters!).

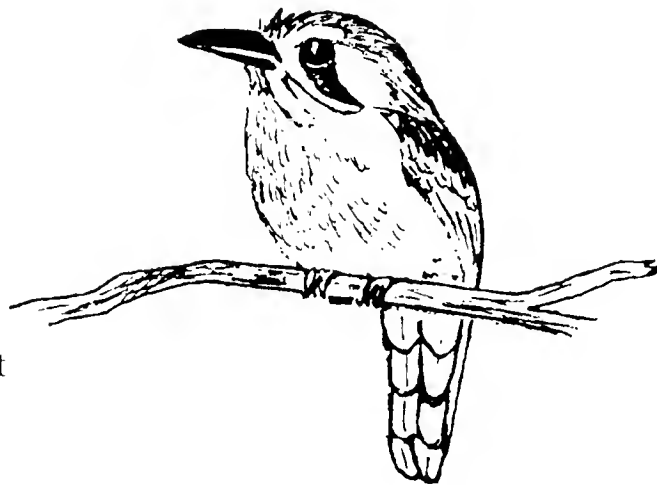
Our apologies to those observers whose reports from Dec. 4–20 were not transcribed onto the Internet from the Northern California Birdbox due to unfortunate circumstances!

Albatross to Ducks

On Nov. 27, a Laysan Albatross returned to the Pt. Arena Cove, MEN, for the fourth consecutive winter (GS), and late reports indicate it was still present at the end of December. A Nov. 30 Monterey Bay Pelagic trip recorded 5 Black-footed Albatross, 62 Northern Fulmars, 5 Short-tailed, 2 Flesh-footed, and 2,100 Black-vented Shearwaters, as well as a single Ashy Storm-Petrel (DLSh). One Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel was seen off Pigeon Pt., SM, Nov. 28 (AH). Ten Tundra Swans, considered rare in San Benito County, were at Paicines Reservoir, SBT, Dec. 22 (DLSh). An endangered "Aleutian" Canada goose was found in Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline, ALA, Dec. 21, well out of its winter range (AW).

A male Blue-winged Teal, also away from its normal wintering ground, was at Pierce Pt. Rd., PRNS, MRN, Dec. 21 (KB). The first Tufted Ducks of the season were reported during the period. One was seen Nov. 25 at the O'Neill Forebay, MER (JS), another Nov.

30 in Corte Madera, MRN (EB), 2 were found at Sunnyvale Water Pollution Control Plant, SCL, Nov. 29 and Dec. 22 (JW, MR), and 1 other Dec. 21 at Mallard Reservoir, CC (SG). Eurasian Wigeons were reported from Glenn, Mendocino, Marin, Santa Clara, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Sonoma counties over the period. There were two Harlequin Ducks at PRNS, MRN, Nov. 28 (DA), and one at Fisherman's Wharf, MTY, Nov. 28–Dec.17 (per MPRBA). Barrow's Goldeneyes were spotted in Alaeda, Monterey, Santa Clara, and San Francisco counties. Hooded Mergansers were abundant, with a high count of 18 at Los Gatos Creek Park, SCL, Nov. 27 (KS) and at least 10 others seen in Alameda, Contra Costa, Monterey, and San Francisco counties. There were also two reports of Oldsquaws, one Dec. 21 on San Leandro Bay, ALA (JB), and the other near the Dumbarton Bridge on SF Bay, SM, Dec. 21 (RT).



Raptors to Alcids

Two Golden Eagles flew over Round Top (Sibley) Regional Park, ALA, and were included in the CBC on Dec. 21, and 2 Bald Eagles were seen the same day over Briones and Lafayette Reservoirs, CC (JB). Five Ferruginous Hawks were reported, one Nov. 3 on Cloverdale Rd, SM (BM), 1 in Peach Tree Valley, MTY, Nov. 28 (per MPRBA), 2 Dec. 21 at the San Jose airport, SCL (MR), and another on the same date at Santa Cruz, SCZ (per MPRBA). A Rough-legged Hawk was seen near Tres Pinos, SBT, Nov. 29 (ME), and another at Sierra Road Summit, SCL, Dec. 21 (MR).

Fifty Mountain Plovers were present at a traditional wintering site near Panoche Valley Road, SBT, Dec. 22 (DLSh). A high count of 6 Lesser Yellowlegs occurred Dec. 21 at Alviso, SCL (MR). Rock Sandpipers were still prominent this month. The individual first reported Nov. 14 lingered on the SCZ coast until at least Dec. 25 (MOB). Another individual was at MacKerricher State Park, MEN, Nov. 30 (DT), a third was at Bodega Head, SON, Nov. 28–Dec.1 (MP, BO), and yet a fourth appeared at Santa Cruz, SCZ, Nov. 26–29 (DC, ME, AW). A Stilt Sandpiper was an exciting find at the Berkeley Waterfront, ALA, Dec. 22, a first record for the Oakland CBC (JB). As often occurs following a heavy storm, Red Phalaropes were seen all over the Monterey Peninsula, MTY, Nov. 27 (per MPRBA). A good number of 26 Pomarine Jaegers were sighted

during the aforementioned Nov. 30 pelagic trip (DLSH).

The probable immature (first-winter) **Lesser Black-backed Gull** first seen Oct. 13 and discussed in the previous Observations column continued until at least the Dec. 21 CBC at L. Cunningham, San Jose, SCL (GH, MR, MOB). This European species is an extremely rare fall and winter visitant, with few Northern California records. A first (or second?) winter Laughing Gull was found at Palo Alto Baylands Duck Pond, SCL, Nov. 29-30 (TG, NL, JS). A single Black-legged Kittiwake was observed on the Nov. 30 pelagic trip (DLSH). Sixteen late Elegant Terns were at Pt. Pinos, MTY, Dec. 6 and some remained until at least Dec. 13 (per MPRBA). The 15 Black Skimmers mentioned in the last 3 Observations columns remained at Charleston Slough, SCL, until at least Dec. 22 (MR). Two additional Black Skimmers were also at Elkhorn Slough, MTY Nov. 28 (per MPRBA), and still 2 others were found at Martin Luther King Regional Shoreline Park, ALA, Dec. 1 (AW). A single Xantus' Murrelet, rarely found N. of Monterey Bay in winter (Small, 1994) was at PRNS, MRN, Nov. 29 (AS).

Hummingbirds to Wood Warblers

A nice gift to one birder was a male Costa's Hummingbird in a Napa backyard, NAP, on Dec. 25 (DH). Montane species of woodpeckers continued to be found at

Warbler sightings

Tennessee Warbler

Dec. 20	El Granada, SM	DK
Dec. 21	Sharon Meadow, GGP, SF	AH, ME

Nashville Warbler

Dec. 21	(3) Humboldt	JS
Dec. 21	Overfelt Gardens, SCL	MR

Lucy's Warbler

Dec. 3-22	Neary Lagoon, SCZ	per MPRBA
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Prairie Warbler

Nov. 24-30	Guadalupe R., SCL	BR, GH, SR
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Palm Warbler

Nov. 29	Fort Funston, SF	AH
Dec. 17	Laguna Grande Park, MTY	per MPRBA
Dec. 21	(4) Salt R., HUM	JS
Dec. 21	Harding Park, SF	PM
Dec. 21	Fair Oaks Park, SCL	MR
Dec. 23	AMSP, MTY	per MPRBA

Black and White-Warbler

Dec. 26	Pine Gulch Creek, MRN	AH
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Hooded Warbler

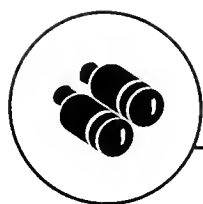
Dec. 22	Eureka Sewage Ponds, HUM	JS
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lower elevations. One Yellow-bellied Sapsucker was counted in the Oakland CBC at Mills College, ALA, Dec. 21 (JB). A single Red-naped Sapsucker occurred Dec. 3 at Sonoma Lake, SON (KH), and another was in Alturas, MOD, Dec. 26 (BB). An adult male Williamson's Sapsucker was seen from Nov. 28-Dec.6 at Jacks Peak Regional Park, MTY (per MPRBA).

Perhaps the most unusual find of the month was the **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** reported from 3 locations! This flycatcher (formerly known as the Olivaceous Flycatcher) normally occurs in canyons of SE Arizona and in S. Texas. It is a very rare late fall and winter visitant and most California records are coastal (Small, 1994). The first

bird was seen at Half Moon Bay, SM, Dec. 1 (BM), and (presumably) another individual was at Neary Lagoon, SCZ, from Dec. 9-22 and conveniently stayed for the CBC (per MPRBA, SA). The third report came from a site near the SF Zoo, SF, Dec. 21, and represented the third consecutive winter visit to SF for this species (PM). Tropical Kingbirds were reported from three locations: Bodega Bay, SON, Nov. 29 (JHo); Miramar, SM, Dec. 21 and 24 (LC, CL); and in San Lorenzo, ALA, Dec. 21 and 24 (DW, SC, KH). The Eastern Phoebe, seen an average of only once or twice each fall in Northern California (Small, 1994) and reported last month, remained in

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Shady Oaks Park, San Jose, SCL, until at least Nov. 30 (GH). The same species was present in that location in December of 1993 and 1994. An Ash-throated Flycatcher, extremely rare in Northern California in the winter, averaging only 1 report per year, was seen at the Guadalupe River, SCL, for the CBC on Dec. 21, repeating a 1996 visit from that species (MR).

A Northern Rough-winged Swallow, a rare winter straggler, provided a thrill for CBC participants at the San Leandro Reservoir, ALA, Dec. 21 (JB). Two Barn Swallows made an equally unusual winter appearance in Alviso, SCL, Dec. 21 (MR). A **Blue Jay**, a familiar eastern species, but extremely rare in California, was seen in Humboldt County up to at least Dec. 26 (MR). Most records are from the northernmost counties. The Blue Jay seems to be increasing its range, however, now being found as far west as Idaho (*Birder's World*, Dec., 1997). It is fascinating that even though the Blue and Steller's Jays may have been separate species for over 5 million years (see December, 1997 *Gull*), they still hybridize in regions where they overlap, and the hybrids may even breed with one of the parental species. A vagrant Yellow-billed Magpie was sighted Dec. 16 in Daly City, SM (SV). A Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, uncommon in the winter, was at Stevens Creek, SCL, Nov. 27 (MM). Mountain Bluebirds were present on Patterson Pass Road, ALA, Dec.

1 (GF), on the BLM Road, FRE, Nov. 29 (ME), and on Panoche Valley Rd, SBT, Dec. 22 (DLSh). A Loggerhead Shrike, extremely rare north of Mendocino, was found at the Salt River, HUM, Dec. 21 (JS). There were spotty reports of wood warblers during the period (see chart). Among these, the rarest find was the Hooded Warbler at the Eureka Sewage Ponds, HUM, Dec. 22 (JS). This eastern deciduous forest species is very rare in California in winter, especially after mid-December (Small, 1994). The Prairie Warbler reported last month was apparently still at Guadalupe R, SCL, Nov. 30-31 (SR).

Tanagers to Blackbirds

A very rare transient Summer Tanager, first found in mid-December (AH), was still at Sharon Meadow, GGP, SF, Dec. 21 (ME). A pair of Red-breasted Grosbeaks graced a private feeder in SF for at least 3 weeks prior to Dec. 24 (RL). A similarly late Black-headed Grosbeak was at Half Moon Bay, SM, Dec. 20 (AE). Two basic-plumaged Lark Buntings, rare and irregular fall visitors, were noted at Bethany Reservoir, ALA, Dec. 23 (AE). Single **Snow Buntings** were found at Asilomar State Beach, MTY, Nov. 25 (per MPRBA, DR, SH, JH) and at Venice Beach, Half Moon Bay, SM, Nov. 28 (DP).

Fall/winter visitant sparrows included 8 White-throated Sparrows from Humboldt, San

Abbreviations for Observers

SA, Steve Abbott; DA, Dick Ashford; EB, Ellen Bluestein; BB, Bob Brandriff; JB, Joelle Buffa; KB; Ken Burton; SC, Steve Chance; LC, Luke Cole; DC, David Copell; ME, Mark Eaton; AE, Al Eisner; GF, George Finger; SG, Steve Glover; TG, Tom Grey; JH, Jay Harrison; SH, Sid Harrison; DH, Dave Haupt; GH, Gjon Hazzard; KH, Kevin Hints; AH, Alan Hopkins; JHo, Joel Hornstein; RJ, Richard Jeffers; DK, Dan Keller; PL, Peter LaTourette; RL, Robert Laws; NL, Nick Lethaby; CL, Calvin Lou; MOB, Many Observers; MM, Mike Mammoser; BM, Bert McKee; PM, Peter Metropulos; BO, Ben Olwine; MP, Mike Parmeter; DP, David Powell; BR, Bob Reiling; DR, Don Roberson; MR, Mike Rogers; SR, Steve Rottenborn; KS, Ken Schmall; CS, Craig Segert; DLSh, Debra Love Shearwater; JS, John Sterling; GS, Grace Steuer; AS, Anthony Surmach; RT, Ron Thorn; DT, Dorothy Tobkin; SV, Sherman Vanlieu; JW, James Walsh; DW, Denise White; AW, Anna Wilcox; AWi, Adam Wilson

Abbreviations for Counties and Others

ALA, Alameda; AMSP, Andrew Molera State Park; CBC, Christmas Bird Count; CC, Contra Costa; FRE, Fresno; GGP, Golden Gate Park; HUM, Humboldt; MEN, Mendocino; MER, Merced; MOD, Modoc; MPRBA, Monterey Peninsula Rare Bird Alert; MRN, Marin; MTY, Monterey; NAP, Napa; PRNS, Point Reyes National Seashore; SBT, San Benito; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SF, San Francisco; SIS, Siskiyou; SM, San Mateo; SON, Sonoma

Francisco, and Santa Clara counties, and 6 Swamp Sparrows noted in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. A straggler Chipping Sparrow was found at Coyote Creek, SCL, Dec. 21 (MR). At least 4 American Tree Sparrows were a Tule L. NWR, SIS, Dec. 25 (BB). Two Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrows were present at the Half Moon Bay Airport, SM, Nov. 29 (CS), and 14 Vesper Sparrows were wintering near Panoche Valley Rd, SBT, Dec. 22 (DLSh). Topping off the Dec. 22 Palo Alto CBC was a **Rusty Blackbird** at the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, SM (RJ, PL).



Power, Politics, & Place: Who Holds the Reins of Environmental Regulation

Ecology Law Quarterly presents a two-day symposium looking at the level of government at which environmental regulation takes place, and why it matters. It will be held on February 20 and 21, 1998.


Join legal scholars, practicing attorneys, representatives from local, state, and federal government, city and regional planners, and speakers from both local grassroots and national environmental organizations for a two-day symposium addressing the

level of government at which environmental regulation does, or should take place.

Speakers include Felicia Marcus, Regional Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, Joseph L. Sax, legal scholar and Professor of Law at the University of California at Berkeley, and Sam Dardick, County Supervisor, Nevada County, California, among others.

Panel discussions will address current environmental issues for which the level of regulation is

important. These include: Land Ownership and Level of Regulation; Management of Public and Private Forests; Land Use Planning, Community and Environmental Limits; Regulation of Pollutants – Federal, State, and Local; and the Role of Local Governments in Protection of Natural Resources.

The symposium will take place at UC Berkeley (Boalt Hall) School of Law. For more information, call (510) 642-0457. 

The Basin's Birds

Continued from page 1

bowed to political pressure exerted by local agricultural interests. It has allowed intensive pesticide use to take place on refuge lands. Such pesticide use poses significant threats to waterfowl. The Service has also allowed inordinately large percentages of the Lower Klamath Refuge to be used for agriculture and has allowed agricultural uses that are not supportive of wildlife.

The Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation has also failed to ensure sufficient water for these refuges, allowing large-scale water diversions for agricultural purposes. As a result of these diversions, the refuge marshes often become dry just when they are most needed by wildlife.

As a result of all of these management problems, the




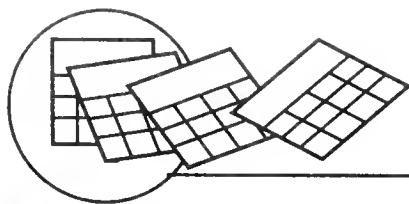
PHOTO BY JOHN GIBBONS

Earthjustice Legal Defense Fund (formerly the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund) has undertaken to sue the Department of the Interior on behalf of GGAS and 11 other environmental groups.

The Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges were created to provide a home for wildlife, while allowing for some compatible agricultural practices. The refuges

were not created to encourage agriculture while grudgingly allowing some compatible wildlife uses. The Department of Interior has gotten this message backwards. We have taken them to court to see that they get it right.

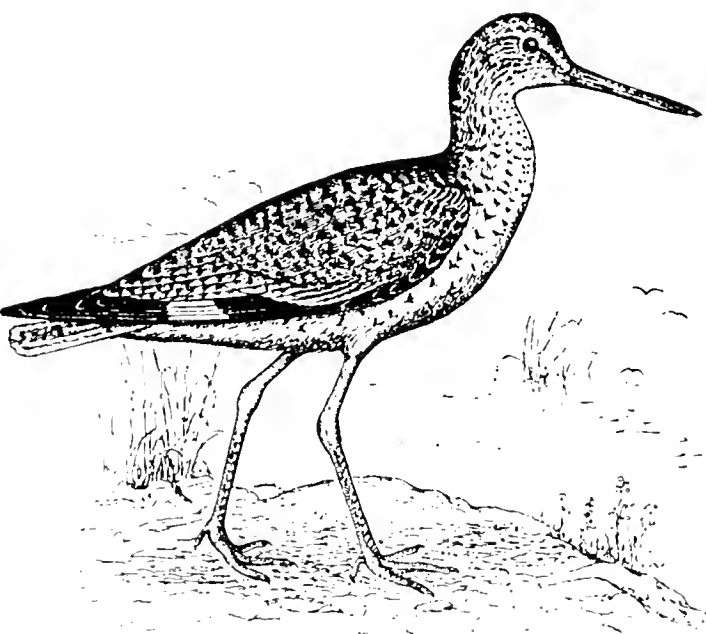
On the Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuges, wildlife comes first. 



February Meeting

Shearwater on Monterey Bay

Debra Shearwater, a full-time naturalist, will present a slide show, "The Seabirds and Marine Mammals of Monterey Bay" at our February meeting. She is the founder of Shearwater Journeys




Thursday, February 19

7:30 p.m.

Northbrae Community Church

941 The Alameda, Berkeley

which has been conducting pelagic trips off the California coast since 1976. She will discuss the unique and varied seabirds, whales, and dolphins of Monterey Bay, including identification and seasonal distribution.

As the director of Shearwater Journeys, she has participated in over 1,100 pelagic trips, including trips for birders, school whale watches, graduate research projects, and as research associate on a 2-month Earth Watch program for Blue Whales. Who better to learn from about our friends in Monterey Bay?! 

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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